

## Songs of Myself

“I looked out this morning,  
and the sun was gone  
Turned on some music to start my day  
Then lost myself in a familiar song  
I closed my eyes, and I slipped away.”

—T. Scholtz, “More Than a Feeling”

In Biblical literature, the “Song of Solomon” stands as one of the most powerful expressions of human love. It is a statement of unconditional devotion and appreciation. Too rarely in our busy lives do we stop to appreciate being alive, and to express what it means to us. We get so caught up in *living* that we forget to *live*. As a little-known chaplain noted, “Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away.”

For this paper (which will also be delivered as a presentation), you will discover, define, and express your life—in large part by and through the lyrics of songs of your choice. How does the music you love describe the moments that take your breath away? If you had been born a song, what words and music would represent the way you perceive and interact with the world?

Begin by choosing music which illustrates how you live your life and what you know of the world. The lyrics will be the specific details which support your commentary. For example, a song I listened to endlessly as a young person was “A Box of Rain” by the Grateful Dead. The last lines of the tune echo in my mind: “Such a long, long time to be gone / And a short time to be there.” I know I often push too hard to have you all be present every moment in class, and I get far too impatient with distractions. But I remember students whose presence I took for granted, and now I find myself missing them every day. We will say goodbye one day, and sooner than we expect our time together will be done. My hope is that I—and you—can appreciate what we do have here in WISE, and take a part of it with us when we part. In this, a song I grew up loving helps define a part of my personality and beliefs.

Note also that you can approach this assignment music-first: choose ten songs which you love for their lyrics, then consider what those lyrics tell about you. How do they describe your struggles and successes? Why do they resonate with you? How do they define what *you* find beautiful? Which lyrics would illuminate what you appreciate and disapprove of, what you love and abhor, and what you know the world needs? By starting with the songs and considering what they tell you about yourself, you may find this assignment one of the most self-educational experiences of your high school career.

A typed paper of three (3) to five (5) pages is due **Wednesday, May 1<sup>st</sup>**. Presentations will begin on this day as well. Remember to bring your music on the day of presentations (song clips consolidated on one CD, cassette, or Ipod with radio connection are the preferred formats). You may weave your speech and music into any format that you wish, but you will be limited to an **eight (8)** minute presentation.

“I need to hear some sounds that recognize the pain in me, yeah,  
I let the melody shine, let it cleanse me mind, I feel free now.”

—The Verve, “Bittersweet Symphony”